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# RETHINKING PARKS: THE ROLE AND PLACE OF CHARITABLE GIVING

## WORKSHOP REPORT

Tuesday, 30 April 2019, 12:30pm – 16:30pm  
Carriageworks Theatre, Millennium Square, Leeds



<https://futureofparks.leeds.ac.uk>

 #loveleedsparks

 #myparkmatters

Rethinking Parks

## INTRODUCTION

On Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2019, the University of Leeds, Leeds City Council, Leeds Community Foundation and the Leeds Parks and Green Spaces Forum jointly hosted a national workshop titled 'Rethinking Parks: The Role and Place of Charitable Giving' at The Carriageworks Theatre in Leeds.

The workshop was generously funded by the National Lottery Community Fund, National Lottery Heritage Fund and Nesta as part of 'Rethinking Parks' - a national programme that aims to develop promising operational models for parks across the country through investigating their potential in locally-implemented national pilot projects.

Some 46 delegates from 31 organisations across the public, voluntary and charitable sectors participated in this lively and engaging event, which shared learning and research from the Rethinking Parks project in Leeds. Notably, Dr Anna Barker (University of Leeds) presented the findings of research into public and business opinion of charitable giving to parks and green spaces. The workshop created opportunities for discussion of the findings and their application for similar initiatives in the UK and convened two themed workshop discussions to explore the role and place of charitable giving to parks and green spaces, and ways to harness voluntary donations, drawing on the expertise and practical experience of delegates.

## WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES:

The core aims of the conference were:

- To bring together representatives from across the parks sector interested in exploring the role and place of charitable giving to parks and understanding how to best harness giving.
- To present the findings of the research by the University of Leeds into charitable giving, and to explore their wider application and learning for similar initiatives in the UK.
- To explore the barriers to giving, challenges and opportunities concerning charitable donations to parks.
- To discuss ways forward for charitable giving to parks in view of the findings of research and workshop discussions.

## WORKSHOP PROGRAMME

12:30 to 13:00	Registration, networking & light lunch *****
13:00 to 13:10	Welcome & Introduction: <b>Emma Trickett</b> , Leeds City Council
13:10 to 13:20	Introduction to the Leeds Parks Fund Partnership: <b>Emma Trickett</b> , Leeds City Council, <b>Lynda Kitching</b> , Leeds Parks & Green Spaces Forum, <b>Pip Goff</b> , Leeds Community Foundation
13:20 to 13:30	Workshop delegate introductions *****
	<b>Session 1: The Role &amp; Place of Charitable Giving to Parks</b> <i>Chair: <b>Emma Trickett</b>, Leeds City Council</i>
13:30 to 13:50	Presentation of Research Findings I: <b>Anna Barker</b> , University of Leeds
13:50 to 14:30	Group Discussions I *****
14:30 to 14:55	Tea & Coffee / Networking *****
	<b>Session 2: Harnessing Giving to Parks</b> <i>Chair: <b>Emma Trickett</b>, Leeds City Council</i>
14:55 to 15:15	Presentation of Research Findings II: <b>Anna Barker</b> , University of Leeds
15:15 to 15:55	Group Discussions II *****
15:55 to 16:25	<b>Session 3: Roundtable – Reflections &amp; Ways Forward</b> <i>Chair: <b>Pip Goff</b>, Leeds Community Foundation</i> <b>Michael Rowland</b> , Bournemouth Parks Foundation <b>Rob Pearce</b> , The Parks Alliance <b>Jennifer Kirkby</b> , Leeds Parks & Green Spaces Forum <b>Sean Flesher</b> , Leeds City Council <b>Fabian French</b> , UK Community Foundations <b>Amy Solder</b> , Nesta *****
16:25 to 16:30	Closing remarks, <b>Emma Trickett</b> , Leeds City Council



## WORKSHOP SUMMARY

The workshop slides are available from: <https://futureofparks.leeds.ac.uk/>

**Emma Trickett** (Senior Projects Manager, Leeds City Council) opened the workshop and led a round-robin of introductions of everyone in attendance.



1 Opening the workshop - Emma Trickett, Senior Projects Manager, Leeds City Council

Emma outlined the aims and rationale for setting up the Leeds Parks Fund, launched in 2017, and how the Leeds model is innovative, particularly in terms of its partnership with the Leeds Parks and Green Spaces Forum and Leeds Community Foundation.

Emma introduced the Leeds Parks Fund as a citywide charitable initiative covering all publicly accessible parks and green space including, but not limited to, the 4,000 hectares of green space managed by Leeds City Council Parks and Countryside service. Leeds has 7 major parks, 63 community parks, 95 recreation grounds, 156 nature conservation sites and 27 cemeteries and crematoria.

Emma explained that the Leeds Parks Fund offers a new way for local people and businesses to donate towards community-led improvements and

enhancements to parks and green spaces in the city without replacing the role of the Council in managing and maintaining parks. It aims to:

- improve the quality of publicly accessible parks and green spaces in the city, as measured by the national Green Flag standard;
- contribute to the key priorities of the Leeds Parks and Green Spaces Strategy plans and targets for the management of green space; and
- improve quality of life for residents, particularly those who are vulnerable or in poverty and to create a city of opportunity for all.



2 Lynda Kitching, Chair, Leeds Parks and Green Spaces Forum

**Lynda Kitching** (Chair, Leeds Parks & Green Spaces Forum) introduced the Forum as a partner in support of the Leeds Parks Fund initiative.

Lynda outlined the role of the Leeds Parks and Green Spaces Forum as an independent, umbrella, voluntary organisation with 92 members, consisting of Friends and In Bloom groups, Residents Associations, Parish Councils, Environmental charities and two Universities - covering over 5,000 volunteers. The Forum was established in 2012 and liaises with Leeds City Council and other bodies to protect, preserve and enhance the City's parks and green spaces for the benefit of people and wildlife, through various means, including supporting local people to set up groups; providing advice and guidance to



those voluntary groups, and raising funds for the benefit of parks and green spaces.

Lynda said that the Forum will be represented on the Independent panel, which will decide where donations are spent. So, as a body, she explained that the Forum is an Ambassador for the Fund, as are individual members, albeit there were some conflicting priorities. Notably, both time and money are already being given by volunteers to 'their' site, which may be a reason for those individuals not to give more to the Leeds Parks Fund.

Lynda complemented Anna Barker and her team at the University of Leeds on the thorough research and thanked all participants for taking part and helping to stimulate a broader dialogue and discussion.



3 Pip Goff, Leeds Community Foundation

**Pip Goff** (Leeds Community Foundation) introduced The Community Foundation and its role in managing and administering the Leeds Parks Fund. She outlined the commitment that Leeds Community Foundation has to the Leeds Parks Fund, which stems from the massive impact that we know parks and green spaces can have on people's health and wellbeing and the value

of engaging communities as part of the solution to the challenges currently faced by our parks.

Pip noted that Leeds Community Foundation is one of 46 community foundations across the UK dedicated to creating positive change in the communities that need it most by connecting national and local donors to community groups and charities in and around the cities in which they operate. Community Foundations have unique reach into communities throughout Scotland, Ireland, Wales and England and are a highly cost-efficient mechanism to distribute funding in partnership with local parks forums, councils and other stakeholders

She said that Leeds Community Foundation supports thousands of charities and voluntary groups across the city, addressing inequalities by working with the private, public and third sector to help create opportunities for those that most need help, and she gave examples of work funded through other programmes.

### **SESSION 1: THE ROLE AND PLACE OF CHARITABLE GIVING TO PARKS**

The workshop was organised into two main parts with group discussions orientated to these main themes, followed by a roundtable providing reflections from the workshop and ways forward.

The first session focused on the role and place of charitable giving to parks and green spaces. Dr Anna Barker, University of Leeds, presented the first part of her team's research findings. Her slides can be found at: <https://futureofparks.leeds.ac.uk/> and a summary of points can be found below.



4 Dr Anna Barker, University of Leeds

Dr Anna Barker extended her thanks for coming today and introduced the research she undertook with Dr Jose Pina-Sanchez on public and business opinion on charitable donations to parks.

She thanked four PG students for their assistance on the project, including Kelly Nemeth, Rizwana Alam, Niela Jorjani and Natacha Chenevoy. She also thanked the National Lottery Heritage and Community Funds and Nesta for funding and supporting it, and the LPF partners too.

By way of background, she said that the Leeds Parks Fund is part of a wealth of innovation and experimentation exploring different ways to harness voluntary donations to parks, which many of you are leading or part of. She displayed a range of initiatives being set up across the UK and discussed their distinctive features.

She said that while philanthropic and charitable donations to parks are not new, as history shows, extending initiatives to harness donations from the general public and businesses in today's changed context, given the financial and other pressures facing parks, is new territory.

While the research was conducted in Leeds, engaging residents, volunteers and businesses in the city, many of the insights, we think, apply more broadly and have implications for people here today engaged in setting up initiatives.

It goes without saying that voluntary donations rely on public and business support, willingness to donate and acceptance of the idea that donations have a role and place to play in funding park improvements.

The complexity of public and business views and their levels of willingness to donate, she said warrants further consideration by local authorities, parks foundations and others as they set up charitable donation initiatives and engage with the public. As in many fields, here, there are both descriptive (empirical) and normative (ethical) issues at play: what is and what ought to happen, which raise slightly different issues and implications.

She said that this research contributes to shaping a discourse on 'charitable giving' in ways that see residents/businesses not simply as a source of 'untapped' funding or 'passive' users of a service provided by the local authority, but as active co-producers of parks and their futures with capabilities, knowledge and resources to be better harnessed through creative initiatives.

She provided main objectives of the social research:

- (1) To explore public and business opinion through surveys and focus groups;
- (2) to identify the characteristics of possible donors to parks through statistical survey modelling; and
- (3) to review the existing literature on charitable giving.

Public willingness to give can also be tested through behavioural research, via trialling tangible opportunities for the public to donate and then measuring to what extent they do actually give in the desired ways and how the public might be best encouraged – or 'nudged' - to donate.

She said there is of course a tangible difference between what people say they will do (i.e. their attitudes) and what they actually do (i.e. their behaviours). We cannot assume that because people say something that they will translate that unproblematically into actions.

In terms of methods, she noted that the research was based on online surveys and focus groups. Researchers received 141 responses from business leaders and 1,434 responses from residents. The responses were weighted so the findings from the business survey are representative of business size, and findings from the resident survey are representative in terms of age and gender. Researchers undertook six focus groups and four '1-2-1' interviews with businesses, residents and volunteers.

She presented a range of research findings on:

1. Public and business support for a variety of different ways to fund parks
2. A debate about what charitable funds should pay for in parks
3. Self-reported willingness to donate to parks, volunteer in parks, leave a legacy to parks, pay more in council tax/business rates for parks.

#### 4. Characteristics of potential donors based on survey modelling.

In summary, she suggested the following:

Donation-based initiatives are understood by the public and businesses as a response to funding pressures, austerity and non-statutory protection.

There is support by the public and businesses for a wide variety of means to supplement public funding for parks, including voluntary donations.

Sentiment towards different ways to supplement the funding of urban green space is connected to its potential to alter the traditional concept, form and character of a public park, reflecting a deeply held belief that parks offer 'spaces apart' from the hustle and bustle of a city.

But, there is a widespread belief that donations should not replace or substitute core public funding.

The public want clarification on 'additionality' from donations & minimum standards that could be expected from local authorities partnering to achieve voluntary donations.

There is a widespread belief that the role of voluntary donations should be to offer 'extras', although many want to see general maintenance and basic facilities improved.

Residents and businesses support the idea of charitable donations to parks, but most were unsure about donating themselves suggesting that many people are equivocal or ambivalent because of uncertainties as to the implications – like filling a funding shortfall.

Residents who reported a willingness to donate to parks were more likely to be under age 34, members of a park 'Friends' group, and to have an annual income of over £40,000.

#### GROUP DISCUSSIONS I: ROLE AND PLACE OF CHARITABLE GIVING

Reflecting on the research findings, delegates discussed three questions on the role and place of charitable giving to parks and green spaces.

Each of the six tables was facilitated by a representative of the Leeds Parks Fund Partnership. Facilitators included: Simon Frosdick (Leeds City Council); Pip Goff, (Leeds Community Foundation); Mike Kinnaird (Leeds City Council); Lynda Kitching (Leeds Parks & Green Spaces Forum); Roseanne Sweeney (Leeds Parks Fund); Kirsty McKinnon (Leeds Community Foundation).

The following provides the main points that were made for each question.

##### **1. What role does/should charitable giving play within the funding of parks?**

- There is a dilemma as to whether charitable giving should replace funding or provide additionality – the overall view was that it should provide 'icing on the cake' rather than fund maintenance.
- There is potential to exploit national media coverage of austerity and the varying degrees of impact experienced on park management.
- Memorials are an option for charitable fundraising, but benches can be an issue in that they require maintenance/replacement and can overwhelm a park. Other forms of memorialisation should therefore be considered.
- The Leeds Parks Fund name could imply that it is providing funding to a local authority – this needs to be considered when promoting LPF.
- "Charitable giving is the cherry on the cake".
- Charitable donations should be money above the minimum standard and should be for betterment of facilities.
- The role of charitable giving should be to enhance parks and green spaces, raise awareness and sharing in the park experience and foster an emotional connection.
- Importance of looking at different asks and clarifying it (legacy v endowment v project).
- Charitable giving should go to 'added value' not ground maintenance but is too simplistic to think of distinct pots of funding for specific activities.
- Charitable giving is peripheral and will never replace parks funding.
- Diversify parks funding via direct giving or wider grants #addedvalue!





5 Simon Frosdick, Leeds City Council – facilitating a group discussion

## **2. How should local authorities position themselves in relation to charitable giving to parks?**

- It is important that the local authority is represented and as land managers have the ultimate say with regard to funded projects. They should not however be the recipients of any funding.
- Leeds Parks Fund needs independence in terms of fundraising activity.
- It is important that the council can provide reassurance that they will retain ownership and undertake maintenance responsibilities.
- Local authorities should make sure there is an association with success, engage local communities via funded staff or roving volunteer groups to engage communities with the most to gain.
- Local authorities should be open to engagement with charitable giving. It should be part of their department's Strategy. Engage senior officers/reinforce message to all Councillors that parks and greenspaces come into their portfolios.
- Local Authorities and other partners need a wider initiative to raise awareness of the values of parks and challenge the general perception that parks are funded by government i.e. publicise that parks are not a statutory service.
- Local Authorities need to raise awareness and communicate the benefits of parks to businesses e.g. to employees.
- Raising awareness of how money is spent will be critical.
- Local authorities should clarify their resources, make the public aware of their role and the role of the parks e.g. health benefits.
- Local authorities should turn over ownership to the users and empower them.
- Local authorities should be used to raise awareness and make the case for parks and green spaces.
- Local authorities should be creating the relationship with the community and volunteers to harness support.
- Local authorities should make businesses more comfortable with giving to a charity.





6 Mike Kinnaird, Leeds City Council – facilitating a group discussion

### 3. What should a charitable income stream be used to fund in parks?

- Leeds Parks Fund should be project-focused in a way that captures the imagination and enthusiasm of people to both give and seek others to give.
- Charitable income should be used for defined projects, fountains, greens gyms, wildlife, playgrounds, to enhance accessibility etc.
- There is an important role for large parks - but there is a strong need for investment in smaller, local parks and green spaces.
- The charitable income stream should be used for a user-driven service and education around capital projects and changing needs.
- Bigger capital projects suited to community involvement e.g. Playgrounds.
- It is too simplistic to think of distinct pots of funding for specific activities.
- The charitable income stream needs to focus on health improvement, the environment, diversifying interests, community-lead is needed, and seed funding (to attract more funding).

- Parks need to share resources to even out inequalities and the Leeds Parks Fund needs some quick wins to get the ball rolling.



7 Roseanne Sweeney, Leeds Parks Fund - facilitating a group discussion





8 Kirsty McKinnon, Leeds Community Foundation - facilitating a group discussion



9 Dr Anna Barker, University of Leeds

## SESSION 2: HARNESSING GIVING TO PARKS

The second session focused on ways to harness giving to parks and green spaces. Dr Anna Barker, University of Leeds, presented the second part of her team's research findings.

Her slides can be found at: <https://futureofparks.leeds.ac.uk/> and a summary of points can be found below.

In part two, Dr Barker presented her research findings relating to:

1. What support there is for a city-wide donation-based initiative, like the Leeds Parks Fund;
2. The types and aspects of parks residents and businesses prefer to give to;
3. The reasons why residents and businesses said they would, may or would not donate; and
4. How charitable initiatives can engage and support the work of Friends and other voluntary groups.

On the **first point**, she said that charitable initiatives and fundraising can focus on a specific park or parks across a wider geographical area, such as a city.

A distinctive feature of the LPF is that it is city-wide. People and businesses can donate to a Leeds parks fund, and then these funds are distributed via grants to communities through specific calls and criteria.

The city-wide scale of the Leeds Parks Fund was seen as its greatest quality because it offered the prospect that 'no park or green space would be left behind'. If donors can choose to give to a specific park, it was believed that this may produce inequalities in investment by primarily benefitting parks in more affluent areas.

The prospect of supporting quality green space across all communities - particularly green spaces in deprived, inner city areas - and the belief that the initiative could encourage 'more communities to become active' in parks were some of the virtues of a city-wide initiative.

However, despite these virtues, it requires donors to concede control and choice over how and where their donation is spent.

A major sticking point was that a citywide focus is unable to fulfil donor choice and preferences for giving to particular parks, based on strong connections they have with certain parks.

This lack of specificity in advance about which projects, parks, green spaces or areas of the city that would benefit from the funds raised was perceived as a significant barrier to giving, and generated skepticism. Hence, targeted giving, based on a donor choice model, was generally preferred.

However, to counterbalance the potential for inequality that donor choice can produce, most supported a 'dual approach' whereby a proportion of a donation goes to a specific park or project of the donor's choice and the remainder to a city-wide fund. This approach was suggested by residents, volunteers and businesses.

In addition, some suggested that, as a citywide initiative, it could focus on city-wide projects or strategic themes common to all parks and green spaces, such as wildlife habitats, bees and pollinators or seek to connect parks and green spaces in a wider green infrastructure that may encourage people to give beyond their local park.

On the **second point**, she said that understanding what aspects of parks residents and businesses prefer to give to, can help to tailor initiatives to best appeal to the public. In terms of aspects of parks, both residents and business leaders preferred to give to habitats for wildlife and park cleanliness.

On the **third point**, she said that understanding the reasons residents and businesses gave as to why they would, may or would not donate, provides context for initiatives to consider in thinking about their approach to engaging potential donors.

In relation to residents, the survey provided a list of possible reasons, which residents could select depending on whether they said they would, may or would not donate. She presented the top five reasons for each.

#### *Why give?*

The main reason was the importance of parks to quality of life (74%). Concerns about the future sustainability of parks were also a main reason for half of residents. Other reasons include the need to provide extra support given cuts to council budgets (33%), to create better places to play (32%) and to support wildlife/bio-diversity (29%).

#### *Why not give?*

Residents who would not donate said they wouldn't they felt it was the Council's responsibility (46%) and they are paying taxes (42%). Other reasons

were preferences to give to other charitable causes and the belief that there are more important causes to support.

#### *Why may give?*

However, most residents (52%) said they may or were unsure about giving money to parks. The main reason was the need for more information about the cause and how the money would be spent (73%). Other reasons mixed and included not having enough money to spare (35%), already paying taxes (29%), other important charitable causes to support (23%), and the perception that it is the Council's responsibility to fund parks (20%). Some prefer to pay more in council tax (16%). A few were unsure if it would make a positive difference (13%), if parks need charitable donations (11%) or if it would benefit them (11%).

In relation to businesses, the survey asked business leaders to write a comment explaining the reasons for their disposition towards donating, or not.

We analysed 96 comments depending on whether they said they would donate, may donate or would not donate and organised them into theme.

#### *Why give?*

- Everyone's responsibility
- Health and wellbeing benefits
- Community values
- Benefits of business recognition

#### *Why not give?*

- Not enough money
- Council's responsibility
- Already paying taxes
- Lack of trust in the Council
- No direct benefits for business

#### *Why may give?*

- Need assurances
- Already have a charity partner
- Depends on finances
- If targeted to specific parks
- If brand benefits
- Need company discussion

On the **fourth point**, she said that volunteers make a significant contribution to parks and green spaces. Volunteers held varied views of the Leeds Parks Fund, what role they might play, and how they might engage with it. We asked



about the following ways: as possible applicants/beneficiaries of funding, as donors, as fundraisers and as champions or promoters.

Most volunteers were happy help raise awareness and 'fly the flag' for the Fund, but preferably in ways that would support their work in specific parks and green spaces. Some volunteers, but not all, saw themselves as potential applicants / beneficiaries of funding, particularly if the Fund supported skilled professionals who could support them with projects. Others noted that there were already community grants schemes to apply to. Many volunteers felt that they were already donating substantial amounts of time and therefore did not see themselves as potential donors. Other volunteers said they would donate money as well as time if they could show benefit to their group's members or park. Most volunteers were already fundraising for their park and, unless the Leeds Parks Fund could be aligned to their efforts, they did not see themselves as fundraisers for the initiative. Overall, there was further scope to harness the energies and work of voluntary groups.

## **GROUP DISCUSSION 2: HARNESSING CHARITABLE GIVING TO PARKS**

Reflecting on the research findings, delegates discussed three questions on harnessing giving to parks and green spaces. Each of the six tables was facilitated by a representative of the Leeds Parks Fund Partnership.

Facilitators included: Simon Frosdick (Leeds City Council); Pip Goff, (Leeds Community Foundation); Mike Kinnaird (Leeds City Council); Lynda Kitching (Leeds Parks & Green Spaces Forum); Roseanne Sweeney (Leeds Parks Fund); Kirsty McKinnon (Leeds Community Foundation).

The following provides the main points that were made for each question.

### **1. What key messages should a fundraising campaign for parks communicate to attract donations?**

- Key messages that should be focused on while fundraising include: ownership and buy-in, understanding how the parks Fund works, that the Leeds Parks Fund is not replacing the local authority funding and that it is distanced from the local authority.
- Key messages should focus on the broad benefits of parks and green spaces that contribute to addressing many important issues.
- Key messages should emphasise that there is no statutory duty for a local authority to provide parks and green spaces.
- Key messages should emphasise the importance of health and mental well-being.

- In terms of fundraising there should be a clear plan, showing this initiative is citywide, not confined to certain areas.
- The urgency of the need for funds must be portrayed and well as the benefits (e.g. increased house values, cleaner air, healthy environment). It is all about the emotional connection.
- For businesses, focus on parks being beneficial for employees, and if the business is close to a park, it gives a good impression to customers too.
- Use strong marketing messages aimed towards residents' health and well-being.
- The key messages that need to be focused on are: positive messaging v. demonstrating local need (combining the message to do both), targeting message to relevant audience, research into successful campaigns, keeping message local and relevant, show people the benefits and most importantly, demonstrate success!
- Key messages to attract donations should be different depending on the audience.
- How to communicate a true picture of what is needed and how to open people's eyes to that is incredibly important.
- Their needs to be a focus on a multi channeled approach and big ideas and urgency. "People like to back the winning horse".
- Tangible outcomes to drive connections are imperative: £ spent = X gain!
- Reduce visibility of the council, promote the charity & foundation.



10 Pip Goff, Leeds Community Foundation - facilitating a group discussion

## 2. What can be done to harness the support of volunteers and park-users to a charitable parks fund?

- To harness the support of volunteers and park-users, initiatives need to use the value and passion of those groups and ignite them into action. Leeds is doing a good job of using the Parks and Green Spaces Forum.
- A community-centric message rather than 'council' based.
- The importance of mobilising communities. Engagement with social media and events.
- Clear governance is very important as well as a clear message of helping to improve parks.
- There should also be emphasis on recognizing contributions, social media advocates, and ring-fencing i.e. no connection with Council's budget.
- Clear messages via social media, local Councillors, posters etc. that communities can help to shape how 'their' park looks/improves via nominations for funding.

- Gaining trust is the first step in harnessing the support of volunteers but the balance of involvement v. giving is also important.
- An understanding of passions and needs, sharing knowledge of what will be supported, a link to other local parks and projects, split donations and praise of friends and volunteers are all options to be considered.
- It is important to make a personal and emotional connection with parks volunteers and users. Grassroots groups must be inspired into action, it is not enough for people to be onboard, they must be involved.
- Empower volunteers/groups to direct or influence. Support professional resources.



11 Lynda Kitching, Leeds Parks and Green Spaces Forum - facilitating a group discussion

## 3. How can we engage businesses in charitable giving to parks?

- To engage businesses, the Leeds Parks Fund needs to focus on things like corporate volunteers and businesses sponsorship and well as the positive health and wellbeing effect of parks and green spaces.
- The Leeds Parks Fund has the potential to work with other Funds to make their impact larger.
- Use Business Improvement Districts to help sell the case.



- Projects need to have a focus and be tangible and aligned, potentially, with a business proposition or at least acknowledge the contribution that a business has made.
- In terms of businesses, focus on the benefits to employees and corporate volunteering and team building opportunities.
- To engage businesses, the plan and message must be clear. It will help if there is already a strong and ongoing relationship with the council e.g. as suppliers.
- Again, the emotional connection is important - research to check how their business charitable/Corporate Social Responsibility giving is decided and approach accordingly.
- To engage businesses, the LPF should consider online branding and marketing, using volunteering as an engagement tool, know the local businesses market, utilize the existing relationships, campaign led activity, and use the fact that businesses have access to people.
- Different businesses have different things to offer, not always money, and the fund needs to be respectful of that and hunt down those other options like corporate volunteering etc.
- It should be about a relationship not just a transaction and could have the potential for a shared vision/ joint project.
- There should be a big focus on greening infrastructure and office space and will as wellbeing in the business setting.
- Gain and build trust and find or employ an advocate.



12 Roseanne Sweeney, Leeds Parks Fund

### SESSION 3: ROUNDTABLE – REFLECTIONS & WAYS FORWARD

The closing panel, chaired by Pip Goff (Leeds Community Foundation), considered reflections on the workshop discussions and research, and ways forward for charitable giving to parks and green spaces.





**13** From left to right - Michael Rowland (Bournemouth Parks Foundation), Rob Pearce (The Parks Alliance), Jennifer Kirkby (Leeds Parks and Green Spaces Forum), Sean Flesher (Leeds City Council), Fabian French (UKCF), Amy Solder (Nesta)

**Michael Rowland** – Head of Parks Development at Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council is his day job but also Co-founder and Trustee of The Bournemouth Parks Foundation, a charity devoted to enhancing Bournemouth's parks and gardens, going above and beyond normal maintenance transforming them into captivating spaces for everyone to enjoy.

Michael discussed the progress made by the Bournemouth Parks Foundation in relation to raising charitable donations. He explained that charitable donations were initially requested for a small number of specific projects decided by the Foundation's Board. While starting small, he said that Bournemouth Parks Foundation had successfully multiplied the amount of resources year-on-year, going above and beyond the standard parks offer. He said that the research confirmed a lot of their own local experiences and findings and welcomed its publication to help develop further thinking. He said that they have had better success in fundraising in wealthier neighbourhoods than more deprived neighbourhoods, but conversely had had more success

in applying for grants for parks in more deprived areas and therefore in terms of equality of resourcing via charitable giving the funding tends to even out.

**Rob Pearce** - The Parks Alliance. Rob helped establish the UK's first crowdfunding aimed solely at green space projects platform with Spacehive when he worked for idverde, the largest private sector landscaping and grounds maintenance company. He subsequently helped set up The Parks Alliance, the new national organization providing a voice for UK parks.

Rob spoke about his experience of using crowdfunding to raise funds for parks and suggested using the platform enabled idverde to develop a low cost, efficient and effective way of raising charitable donations for the communities in and around the parks they manage. He described that one of the challenges for community groups wishing to use crowdfunding however is the need for campaigning and social media skills. He suggested that a benefit of working with platforms like Spacehive was that it also created wide ranging opportunities for partnerships to develop to support fund raising and delivery. Rob also noted the importance of making the business case for Parks so local decision makers understood their true value. For example, a recent study for Sheffield showed that for every £1 spent on parks £36 of benefits are generated in terms of better health and well-being, reduced carbon emissions and reduced pollution.

**Jennifer Kirkby** - Director and Vice Chair of Friends of Parkinson's Park Community Interest Company – a not for profit enterprise set up to enhance and improve a private sector owned park in Guiseley for the local residents and she is also Chair of Aireborough Neighbourhood Forum, today representing Leeds Parks & Green Spaces Forum.

Jennifer thanked Anna for her excellent research and presentation and spoke about her experience as a community interest company working with private developer. She stressed new green space maintenance trends and the benefit of supporting community organisations in generating local involvement in Parks.

**Sean Flesher** - Chief officer - parks and countryside, Leeds City Council, Sean has embedded a culture of civic enterprise to support quality parks and green space across Leeds. Under his leadership, Leeds has developed visitor attractions, opened the Arium and won two gold medals at Chelsea with support from philanthropist, the late Jimi Heselden.

Sean said he is very grateful for the ongoing support of councillors from all political backgrounds for the public parks and green spaces in Leeds; they do recognise the immense value of those sites to the city. He found the results of the research of interest and was pleased that people have expressed support

for the idea of charitable giving to parks whilst highlighting the need for core funding. The Leeds City Council Parks and Countryside Service aim to continue to support Leeds Parks Fund as part of a blended approach to funding and managing parks, which includes core funding and being more enterprising, to ensure they can be maintained to Green Flag standard and remain free to access.

**Fabian French** - Chief Executive of UK Community Foundations where he is passionate about increasing the influence and funding for Community Foundations and has overseen the development of innovative programmes including a focus on improving communities and civic engagement.

Fabian said that he was new to the debates surrounding public parks and he had learned a lot from the workshop. He said that the focus has been on specific places today, but it was clear that these discussions are important and relevant across the U.K. He said that the Leeds Parks Fund being held by the local Community Foundations is an inspired model and should be looked at in other places. A lot of people have stressed that charitable giving to parks should not replace the core provision from Local Authorities: it should be additional. He said that he has sympathy with this view but considers it to be risky. In the absence of statutory obligation to fund, he suggested that the result of holding this line could be parks will close. He liked the idea of split donation models discussed as a flexible model which Community Foundations are well placed to deliver. He said that his action after today is to consider how Community Foundations across the UK can support and help grow a national initiative, drawing on their fundraising expertise, and to provide a flexible vehicle for park funds everywhere.

**Amy Solder** – Leads the Rethinking Parks programme at Nesta where she is particularly interested in how innovation can tackle some of the big questions facing the UK.

Amy thanked Anna and Emma for the research report and its findings and challenged everyone in the room to 'act on' this information, using it to inform new initiatives. She challenged Leeds City Council and partners to incorporate the insights into the Leeds Park Fund rather than stick to a predisposed plan. She asked everyone to focus on action and behaviour, building on the report which provides information on attitudes - will people give money to parks? We need to test these initiatives in the real world. She asked everyone to shout about their work and progress, so others can learn from it.

## CLOSING

**Emma Trickett** (Leeds City Council) closed the workshop thanking everyone for coming and for their contributions. She noted that the Leeds Parks Fund

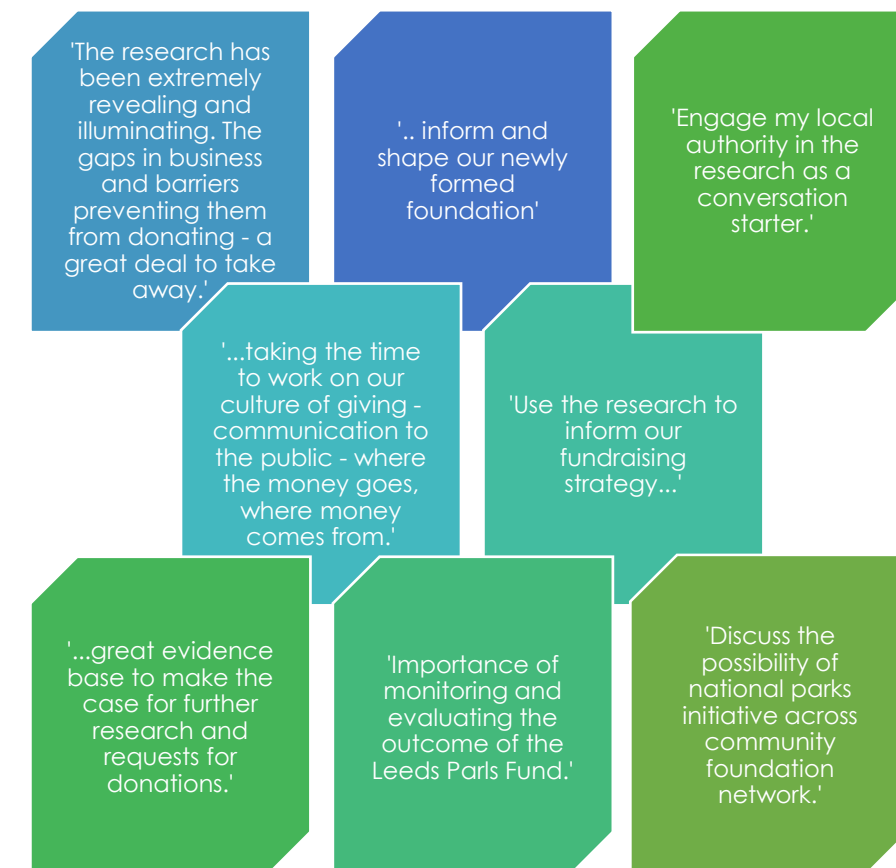
Partnership look forward to developing the model, and to continuing to work with other Rethinking Parks projects to maximise the benefits of public parks and green spaces for people and wildlife in the future.

## WORKSHOP FEEDBACK

In total 28 delegates completed and returned workshop feedback forms. On average they rated the workshop, as 8.3 on a scale of 0 = poor to 10 = excellent.

In addition, delegates were asked to rate the extent to which the research and workshop enhanced their understanding and knowledge of the topic. The average rating was 8 on a scale of 0 = not at all to 10 = a great extent.

We also asked for feedback on what, if any, next steps they or their organisation will take because of the workshop. These are some of the comments we received:



## LIST OF DELEGATES

Rob	Acton-Campbell	Bristol & Bath Parks Foundation
Alicia	Alli	Nesta
Anna	Barker	University of Leeds
Vivienne	Bate	Beeston in Bloom
Drew	Bennellick	National Lottery Heritage Fund
Jaki	Brunton-Douglas	Walsall Council
David	Cansfield	City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council
Margaret	Crowe	Friends of Beckett Park
Richard	Ennion	Bristol City Council
Sean	Flesher	Leeds City Council
Fabian	French	UKCF
Simon	Frosdick	Leeds City Council
Jan	Garrill	Two Ridings Community Foundation
Al	Garthwaite	Leeds City Council
Simon	Goff	Burnley Borough Council
Pip	Goff	Leeds Community Foundation
Tiffany	Gregor	Nesta
Kate	Hainsworth	Leeds Community Foundation
Martin	Hamilton	Leeds Civic Trust
Janet	Hindle	Wade's Charity
Ella	Hogg	Bristol City Council
Lorraine	Irving	Lake District Foundation
Stephen	Kielty	Redcar & Cleveland People Powered parks
Mike	Kinnaird	Leeds City Council
Jennifer	Kirkby	Leeds Parks & Greenspace Forum
Lynda	Kitching	Leeds Parks & Green Spaces Forum
Nigel	Lees	Woodhouse Ridge Action Group
Sarah	Marrison	Groundwork NE & Cumbria
Kirsty	McKinnon	Leeds Community Foundation
Mike	Milen	Redcar & Cleveland Voluntary Development Agency
Kelly	Nemeth	University of Leeds
Paul	Pearce	Bath and North East Somerset Council
Robert	Pearce	The Parks Alliance
David	Renwick	National Lottery Heritage Fund
Paulette	Romain	Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government
Michael	Rowland	Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole Council
Sarah	Royal	Birmingham Open Spaces Forum
Sue	Sanctuary	Bristol & Bath Parks Foundation
Alastair	Sayles	Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Amy	Solder	Nesta
Roseanne	Sweeney	Leeds Parks Fund
Tony	Thapar	TNL Community Fund
Lucy	Thornton-Reid	Nene Park Trust
Bob	Thorp	City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council
Emma	Trickett	Leeds City Council
Brian	Waugh	Zoes Place



